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***Q: The Growth and Diversification Plan Guidelines Section V says plans will be evaluated by the "efficiency with which GO Virginia funds are spent by the Regional Council?"***

A: The Board believes that most of the state grant to regional councils for initial activities should be focused on the development of the Growth and Diversification Plan itself or capacity building activities, not administrative overhead. While it is anticipated that each region will incur some administrative costs, which will be allowable expenses and can be reimbursed, these should be minimized.

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***Q. What are "capacity building activities?"***

A. These are activities undertaken by the regional council that support analysis or other efforts that lead to project development and implementation. Examples could be additional studies on existing and emerging clusters, entering into MOUs or other agreements with potential funding and implementation partners, and other similar initiatives that will lead to successful projects.

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***Q: What is the definition of a "higher-paying job?" Out-of-state revenue?***

A: A higher-paying job is one that pays above the current median for the communities that propose a regional project. Out-of-state revenue is money brought into the local economy either through traditional economic development attraction, retention, or expansion activities or new revenue derived from sales to out of state markets by existing or new companies in a region.

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***Q: Should potential regional projects be included in the plan?***

A: No. This is a planning document only. Projects developed in a region should be aligned with the plan, but potential projects, or even prioritization of eventual funding for such projects, should not be included in the plan.

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***Q: If a region already has a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document, will that suffice for the Growth & Diversification Plan?***

A: No. A CEDS is a more comprehensive economic development plan for a region that is not specifically aligned with the GO Virginia purpose statement or legislative mandate. Certain aspects of the CEDS may be instructive for the development of the Growth and Diversification Plan, but it is not a substitute.

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***Q: How much public input is required in the development of the plan?***

A: It is in the discretion of the regional council to determine the amount of public input in developing the plan; however, we urge councils to undertake reasonable efforts to ensure significant participation in its development, review, and approval.

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***Q: How does the Growth & Diversification Plan align with the skills gap analysis effort now being undertaken by our regional WIB?***

A: The federally mandated WIB skills gap analysis has already started and will be completed before the deadline for the completion of the Growth & Diversification Plan. It is the expectation, however, that there will be efforts to align these plans at some future date as they relate to the creation of more higher-paying jobs.

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***Q: The guidelines point to the need to focus on private sector growth, however, are we prohibited from outlining opportunities tied to the growth of public sector employment, so long as it meets the other GO Virginia priorities and purpose statement?***

A: No, public sector opportunities can be explored and outlined as appropriate in the plan.

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***Q: What's the linkage between GO Virginia and the new credentialing program at the Virginia Community College System?***

A: While the VCCS program was not technically part of the GO Virginia initiative, it is anticipated that as the regional councils identify skills gaps and economic opportunities, there will be the chance for collaboration with local campuses to ensure credentials being offered align with the identified economic opportunities in its host region.

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***Q: Can a region rely on different data sets to measure outcomes and prioritize opportunities from what will be provided by the GO Virginia Board.***

A: Yes. Additional data sets that outline the challenges and opportunities facing a region are permitted, however, the baseline data provided by the GO Virginia Board must, at a minimum, be covered.

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***Q: What do the guidelines mean by "sustainable" projects and initiatives? Does this relate to environmental conservation goals?***

A: By sustainable, the Board wants to be sure that efforts and opportunities prioritized by a regional council have a likely chance of growth and development even after GO Virginia matching funds are no longer available.

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***Q: Why are commuting patterns an important area for analysis?***

A: Many regions of the state have significant out-migration of residents each day to other regions that diminishes the ability to retain or grow existing or emerging clusters. Should such conditions exist in a region and that hamper economic growth, these should be detailed and opportunities to retain the workforce in their home communities should be explored.